

SEMINOLE COUNTY GOVERNMENT AGENDA MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Brief the Board on the status of the Agriculture Advisory Committee and seek direction and input regarding recommended actions

DEPARTMENT: Community Services

DIVISION: Extension Service

AUTHORIZED BY: Joe Forte

CONTACT: Tom Tomerlin

EXT: 7134

MOTION/RECOMMENDATION:

Staff is seeking direction from the Board regarding the recommendations presented by the Seminole County Agriculture Advisory Committee.

County-wide Barbara Hughes, Richard Tyson, Select Agriculture Advisory Board Member(s)

BACKGROUND:

The Seminole County Agriculture Advisory Committee (SCAAC) was formed in 1988 as a general purpose advisory group for agricultural issues within the County. The SCAAC membership includes a mix of agriculture industry leaders (see attached membership list and goals). Consistent with the mandate of the University of Florida's Cooperative Extension Service, SCAAC work efforts include planning and executing agriculture related workshops and events such as the annual farm tour. Additionally, as an advisory group to the Board, on occasion the SCAAC deliberates on agriculture issues influenced by local policy. The purpose of this briefing is to update the Board on SCAAC work, and specifically address three items of special concern, as follows:

- **Item No. 1 - Signage requirements for Agriculture**

The SCAAC has provided a formal recommendation regarding this item (see attached).

- **Item No. 2 - Promotion of Agritourism**

In accordance with a relatively new state law:

"Local governments and agricultural representatives shall meet for the purpose of discussing the benefits of agritourism to local economies and opportunities for cooperation, conflict resolution, regulatory streamlining, and incentives." (Fla. Stat. Sec. 570.962(2))

The SCAAC would like to begin this conversation about Agritourism with the Board. To date, the County Extension Services and Economic Development Department Staff have met and plan to update the tourism website (<http://www.visitseminole.com/>) with information regarding local farmers markets, U-Pick operations, and other Agriculture related attractions and events. In addition, as outlined in the signage recommendation, the SCAAC believes that more flexibility in the sign regulations will help Agritourism.

Consistent with direction set forth in Florida Statutes, the SCAAC will continue to discuss ways to cooperatively address Agritourism through conflict resolution, regulatory streamlining, and incentives. The SCAAC would appreciate input and direction from the Board regarding Agritourism.

- **Item No. 3 - Need to Clearly Communicate Agriculture's Economic Contributions**

The ability to sustain a rural area within Seminole County requires a viable and functioning agricultural sector. Given this, it is essential that the community recognize the economic merits of agriculture, which will lend support to regulatory streamlining and creation of incentives. A 'back-of-the-envelope' estimate of agriculture's impact in the County was produced in 2006, and is attached to this memorandum. At this juncture, however, SCAAC believes that a more rigorous economic impact analysis should be conducted.

An important consideration in the impact study is that agriculture's net fiscal impact on local government is strongly positive. An example given in "Florida Citrus: a Comprehensive Guide (IFAS Publication, 2006)", is that local government's spend only .08 cents per every dollar of tax revenue generated by agriculture (e.g., citrus). This figure contrasts markedly with the high service costs associated with residential uses.

The cost range for conducting an economic impact study can vary greatly depending on data availability and quality. According to University of Florida estimates, the cost to conduct the analysis can vary from \$5,000 to \$20,000, largely depending on data needs and assumptions. At this juncture, the SCAAC is attempting to secure some level of funding from the Florida Farm Bureau and other sources, including grants. The SCAAC requests that the Board authorize Staff to fully ascertain data needs and the resultant costs associated within an economic impact study, and to revisit funding options with the Board at a future date.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners direct the Planning Staff to evaluate the impacts of the sign changes in the land development code and prepare a report based on the recommendation of the Seminole County Agriculture Advisory Committee.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Agriculture Advisory Board Members
2. Agriculture Advisory Board Goals
3. Signage Recommendation
4. Agriculture Impact - Seminole County

Additionally Reviewed By:

- ☒ County Attorney Review (Susan Dietrich)
- ☒ Grant Review (Jennifer Bero, Lisa Spriggs)

**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
AGRICULTURE ADVISORY COMMITTEE 2008 - 2009**

Board of County Commissioners Seminole County Services Building 1101 E. First Street Sanford, FL 32771		Phn: 407-665-7219 Fax: 407-665-7958
DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS	COMMITTEE MEMBERS	COMMITTEE MEMBERS
<u>District 1</u> Bob Dallari <i>Diane Merkt - 7215</i>	REGGIE BROWN (1/1/09) 2576 Westminster Terrace Oviedo, FL 32765 407-257-2027 Reggie@Floridatomatoes.org	TOM MINTER (1/1/09) 1700 Deleon Street Oviedo, FL 32765 407-365-5360 flpesttom@aol.com
<u>District 2</u> Michael McLean <i>Fran MacDonald - 7205</i>	JACK VAUGHAN (1/1/09) 6770 W. SR 46 Sanford, FL 32771 (W) 407-330-0296 x203 (Fax) 407-321-1697 jack@dishgarden.com	JIM HUNTER (1/1/09) 2015 Center Drive Casselberry, FL 32707 (W) 407-695-2930 Rhunter@hteinc.com
<u>District 3</u> Dick Van Der Weide <i>Diane Eswine - 7207</i>	P. J. KLINGER (1/1/09) 1931 W. Lake Brantley Road Longwood, FL 32779 407-869-6545 PJKlinger@cfl.rr.com	REX CLONTS (1/1/09) 2702 Lust Road Apopka, FL 32703 (W) 407-886-2490 (C) 407-468-1242
<u>District 4</u> Carlton Henley <i>Gretchen Venn - 7201</i>	JOHN LOMMERSE (1/1/09) Dutch Mills Nursery 535 Upsala Road Sanford, FL 32771 407-322-8385 jklomm@yahoo.com	DAVID EVANS (1/1/09) Nelson & Company 6617 Lake Charm Circle Oviedo, FL 32765 (W) 407-365-6631 (H) 407-365-5945 nelsonde@fdn.com
<u>District 5</u> Brenda Carey <i>Amy Lockhart - 7209</i>	BOB BRAUN (10/1/10) 381 Rest Haven Road Geneva, FL 32732 407-349-0111 bobbraun@cfl.rr.com	IMOGENE YARBOROUGH (1/1/09) Ed Yarborough Ranches, Inc. PO Box 65 Geneva, FL 32732 (W) 407-349-5342

SEMINOLE COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

GOAL:

In order that the citizens of Seminole County continue to reap the natural and economic benefits of agriculture, the Seminole County Commissioners Agricultural Committee shall assist the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners in the protection and promotion of agriculture.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To educate the public about the beneficial aspect of agriculture (employees, jobs, products, water recharge, etc.), the value of property and property rights which affect the continued presence of agriculture. To be included: citrus, ornamental and turf grass, foliage, vegetable crops, roadside markets, cattle and horse industries.
2. To assist in the formulation of regulations and programs affecting agriculture.
3. To document agriculture's presence in Seminole County.
4. To investigate alternative agricultural uses for agricultural lands.
5. To give input on policies and resolutions that might affect agriculture or the environment.

WORK TASKS:

1. Inventory amount of agricultural lands, types of crops and products, number of jobs, etc.
2. Present an update on activities of the Cooperative Extension Service and programs planned to help commercial agriculture, woody ornamental, turf grass, foliage growers, citrus, livestock, urban horticulture, consumer clientele, and 4-H and youth activities.
3. Assist staff through review and comment on amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and Land Development Regulations.
4. Research alternative agricultural uses for agricultural lands.
5. Provide periodic reports to the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners and public when tasks are completed.

THE FOLLOWING WAS MOVED AND ACCEPTED
AT THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE SEMINOLE COUNTY AGRICULTURE
ADVISORY COMMITTEE, SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA, ON
THE 1st DAY OF OCTOBER, 2008.

Whereas, The Seminole County Agriculture Advisory Committee recognizes the following:

1. In accordance with Florida Statutes Section 570.962¹, the State of Florida encourages Agritourism Statewide and requires that local governments meet to discuss opportunities to streamline regulations and provide incentives for Agritourism; and
2. Seminole County desires to maintain and grow its agricultural industry as a viable and contributing sector of the local economy; and
3. Seminole County has utilized land use and zoning instruments to promote the protection of agricultural uses and the environment; and
4. Strong and viable agricultural enterprise is essential in order to maintain the rural character and lifestyle of certain areas in the County.

Considering the above points, in order to successfully operate many agricultural businesses in Seminole County, it has become necessary to provide adequate signage in order to direct customers to the farm. This requirement is especially prevalent in operations that contribute to Agritourism, such as U-Pick operations. Given this, the Agriculture Advisory Committee recommends the following to the Seminole County Board of County Commissioners:

1. That the County's Land Development Code be amended to allow greater regulatory flexibility for Agricultural Business to post off-premise Signs.
2. That these amendments to the Land Development Code provide greater flexibility to post off-premise signs on a permanent, seasonal and daily basis.
3. That the Agriculture Advisory Committee participate in the re-write of these sign regulations in order to help balance business needs, aesthetic, and safety concerns.

The Agriculture Advisory Committee respectfully appreciates the Board's consideration of this recommendation and strongly believes that, if done properly, will benefit not only farmers, but all residents of Seminole County.

¹ **570.962 Agritourism participation impact on land classification.—**

(1) In order to promote and perpetuate agriculture throughout the state, farm operations are encouraged to engage in agritourism. The conduct of agritourism activity on a bona fide farm or on agricultural lands classified as such pursuant to s. 193.461 shall not limit, restrict, or divest the land of that classification.

(2) Local governments and agricultural representatives shall meet for the purpose of discussing the benefits of agritourism to local economies and opportunities for cooperation, conflict resolution, regulatory streamlining, and incentives.

**SEMINOLE COUNTY AGRICULTURE 2005-2006***

Number of farms	344
Crop & Improved Pasture	7,385 acres
Fruit Crops	1,150 acres
Livestock	4,500 acres
Landscape & Foliage Nursery Crops	950 acres
Vegetable Crops	125 acres
Turfgrass Sod	600 acres
Pasture Range & Woodland	29,837 acres
Total County Farmland	37,162 acres
% of Total County Land	19%
Total Agricultural Cash Receipts -	\$23,500,000

The value of Agriculture to the economy of Seminole County:
1.8 (economic multiplier effect) x \$23,500,000 = \$42,300,000

* Estimates based on 2002 United States Census of Agriculture, Florida Agricultural Statistical Directory 2006, and Grower and Extension Service Estimates. Revised 04/23/07, RT

Commercial Agriculture Multicounty Extension Agents with responsibility in Seminole County: Richard Tyson, Commercial Turfgrass & Vegetable Crops (407-665-5554); Ryan Atwood, Citrus; Juanita Popenoe, Woody Ornamentals (352-343-4101); Dennis Mudge, Livestock.